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Donovan Credits Food Drugs in Captive Swap

NEW YORK, April 24 (AP).—James E. Donovan says he believes the food and medicines sent to Cuba as ransom for the Bay of Pigs invasion prisoners contributed more to Monday's release of 27 Americans from Cuba than the release of four Cubans here the same day.

The Brooklyn lawyer, who engineered the release of the 27 Americans, also says he was the one who suggested that the four Cubans held in New York State be repatriated in return.

Two Cubans and a naturalized Cuban-American—all three indicted for sabotage conspiracy—and Francisco (The Hook) Molina del Rio, who was serving a murder sentence, were freed late Monday and arrived in Cuba by plane yesterday. Twenty-one of the released Americans flew to the United States Monday.

Asks Reciprocity

Mr. Donovan, who discussed the exchanges with a newsmen last night, said he suggested to Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro several months ago "that if he would exercise clemency with respect to all Americans held prisoner there, that perhaps I could induce the Government of the United States and the State of New York to exercise clemency on a reciprocal basis with respect to the four Cubans."

Mr. Donovan said Premier Castro told him that he would like to consider the suggestion and talk it over with his cabinet.

Mr. Donovan said that, although he considers the food and medicines delivered to Cuba to be the deciding factor in the release of the 27 Americans, he had suggested the release of the Cubans here "to ease causes of tension between the two countries."

He said Molina's case was a big issue in Cuba, and most Cubans considered him as a political prisoner.

Molina Charges Abuses

Molina, freed by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, charged in Havana yesterday that prisoners in the United States "live in deplorable conditions and are treated to the most cruel of tortures."

Mr. Donovan said Molina, who looked fit, said he was in the United States "for 15 years, and I have never seen a man who has been in the United States for 15 years and is still alive."

Mr. Donovan said he was in Havana, N. Y., and was available for comment.

In the cases of the two Cubans and the Cuban-American charged with espionage conspiracy, the United States Government had a Federal indictment here charges the indictments and free them for transfer to Cuba.

Molina was sentenced in New York City to a term of 30 years to life for the accidental fatal shooting of a 9-year-old Venezuelan girl during a brawl between anti and pro-Castro Cubans in a Manhattan restaurant in 1960.

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